

A
SERMON

ALLUDING

TO THE

Present Times.

BY THE

Rev. ALEXANDER BENJAMIN GREAVES,
*Minister of St. Martin's Chapel, Stoney-Middleton, in the
County of Derby.*

‘I also will shew mine opinion.’.....Job;

SHEFFIELD:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY JAMES MONTGOMERY,

1797.

PREFACE.

.....

IN the FIRST PART of this discourse, while enumerating the mercies of God towards us, we have pursued the thoughts of a late Divine on the subject, and some of his expressions have been adopted, but this, in the present case, is a matter of no signification, as this performance is sent into the World at this alarming crisis, with a view mostly for the benefit and instruction of the lower orders of men.

Ye severe critics, be so kind as to permit this small composition to pass quietly on its way, without molestation, as it is not, in any wise, deserving of your attention, and as the Author has no wish to rank with the competitors for Literary Talents, &c. His views, in the present afflicting state of human affairs are very contrary.



A SERMON, &c.

But Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

II. CHRON. CHAP. 32, V. 25.

AMIDST the whole class of Sins and of Vices that are at once both decried and practised in the world, there is none more base, more common, or more offensive, than *ingratitude*.—Ingratitude towards the Supreme Benefactor. Ingratitude is the sin of Individuals, of Families, of Churches, of Kingdoms, and even of all Mankind.

The guilt of ingratitude lies heavy on the whole race of men: the guilt of ingratitude lies heavy, extremely heavy, on the inhabitants of this kingdom at this awful and alarming moment, tho' alas but few of them, very few of them indeed, either feel or lament it.

None of us can suppose we are in no danger of this sin, when even the pious king Hezekiah did not escape the infection. In the memoirs of his life, so famous for Piety, zeal for reformation, victory over his enemies, glory and importance at home and abroad, this alas is recorded of him, that he rendered not again to his Benefactor, according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah, and Jerusalem.

Many had been the blessings of king Hezekiah's life: we will particularise two, recorded in this Chapter.

The Assyrians had over-run a great part of the country, and purposed to lay siege to Jerusalem. Their

haughty monarch who was grown insolent with success, sent Hezekiah a blasphemous letter, to alarm and intimidate him and his people. But here stop, and see the efficacy of prayer; Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah, and other pious people it may be, among the Jews made their prayer to the God of Heaven—the Supreme Ruler of the world,—and the Almighty disposer of all human events. Jehovah hears, and works a miraculous deliverance for them. He sends out an Angel who destroyed in one night an hundred, four-score and five thousand Men †. Sennacherib with the thin remains of his army, fled home, inglorious; and his two sons

† What would the Author of the Age of Reason say to this? He would not hesitate for a moment to dip his pen in wormwood and gall, and if possible, in ingredients still more bitter, in order to hold up this story to the eyes of men in a point of view the most silly, ridiculous and absurd. But let this Champion of the Deistical World take heed, lest, while he is setting himself against the Lord, and against his anointed, and busily engaged, by every means that human craft, with Satan's assistance, can devise, in shaking the Faith of thousands, respecting the great truths of Revelation, those horrors of conscience should seize him, experienced at the moment of dissolution by his elder brother VOLTAIRE, who in the agonies of death, manifested signs of the utmost dismay and dread, and in a fit of wild despair, snatched hastily up the Pot from the side of his bed, filled with ingredients the most nauseous, and drank them to the very dregs, declaring at the same time (as has been affirmed from good authority) that if the Physician, who stood by his side, could not for a short space retard the stroke of death, he should go to the Devil, and would take him along with him. If then, O reader, thou art desirous to know something of the much to be wished for consolation, arising amidst the various Calamities of life, from the system of Deism, so much approved of, in the present enlightened age, read the following extract from the works of VOLTAIRE—

“Who can without horror (says this Philosopher) consider the whole Earth as the empire of destruction! it abounds in wonders, it abounds also in Victims: it is a vast field of carnage and contagion.—Every species is without pity, pursued and torn to pieces, thro' the earth, and air, and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together: he smarts

sons assassinated him at an idolatrous altar. Thus Jerusalem was freed from danger, in almost a moment of time, and the country rescued from slavery and from the calamitous and horrid ravages of War. Such a deliverance as this, wrought by the immediate hand of God, was certainly a sufficient reason for ardent—the most ardent gratitude.

Another deliverance followed upon this. Hezekiah was sick unto death, but upon his prayer to God, he was recovered and fifteen years added to his life. This also was great cause of gratitude, and we find it had
this

continually under two scourges, which other animals never feel; anxiety and listlessness in appetite, which make him weary of himself.—He loves life and yet he knows that he must die. If he enjoys some transient good, for which he is thankful to Heaven, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms.—This knowledge is his fatal prerogative: other animals have it not. He feels it every moment, rankling and corroding in his breast. Yet he spends the transient moment of his existence, in diffusing the misery that he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated, in robbing and being robbed, in serving that he may command, and in repenting of all that he does.—The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a croud of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate, and the Globe contains rather carcases than men. I tremble upon a review of this dreadful picture to find that it implies a complaint against Providence, and *I wish that I had never been born.*

Unhappy man!—Thou hadst discernment sufficient O Voltaire! to enable thee to behold the miseries that are in the earth by reason of sin, but with all thy Wisdom, thy Philosophy, and thy Learning, thou couldst not discern the happy means of escape therefrom. Hadst thou embraced the Gospel as true; hadst thou cast thy guilty Soul on the blood and merits of our crucified Redeemer, and followed him in the regeneration here upon earth, then instead of dying a wretched death, and wishing, while in life, thou hadst never been born, thou wouldst have triumphed at that dread moment, and with the holy apostle St. Paul, have exclaimed, 'Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.'

this effect upon him while the sense of his deliverance was fresh upon his mind, but alas ! in time, these impressions wore off, and pride, that odious, wicked, offensive and uncreaturally temper began to arise. He indulged his vanity, in exposing his treasures to the Babylonian messengers. This pride passed not without marks of the divine indignation, for we are told, there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah, and Jerusalem.

As the crime was not peculiar to him, so neither is the punishment. Nations and individuals have suffered in this manner, from age to age; and under the guilt of it we and our country are at this awful moment languishing.

In order that we may form some proper ideas of our ingratitude towards God; we shall enumerate various of his mercies bestowed upon us, and expose the baseness of unthankfulness under the reception of them.

Mercy has poured in upon us on all sides, and followed us from the first of our existence to the present moment; rich repeated mercy. The blessing of a body wonderfully and fearfully made: complete in all its parts, and monstrous in none. The blessing of an immortal Soul, preserved in the exercise of Reason for many years, capable of the noble, sublime, and refined pleasures of religion, and the everlasting enjoyment of the great God, the supreme and eternal good. The blessing of a spacious world, thoroughly furnished for our accommodation, illumined with a splendid Sun, and an endless train of glittering Stars: the earth adorned with trees, with vegetables, with various sorts of grain and animals, for our support and for our comfort: and the rolling Ocean, a medium of trade, and a vast store of fishes. The blessings of the early care of parents, to provide for us in our infant days and to guide and restrain us in the giddy years of youth—

The

The blessing of health for months, for years. The blessing of raiment suited to the different seasons of the year. The blessings of rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, of Summer and Winter; of seed time and Harvest; the vicissitude of night and day.—The sweet repose of sleep, and the enjoyment of our waking hours. The many blessings of society; the most endearing relations:—relations included in the tender name of husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister. The blessings we may say of peace at present in our land. Blessings in every age of life, in childhood and youth; in the meridian of our days, and in the decline of life. Blessings as numerous as our moments, as long continued as our lives; for while we have the air to breathe in, the earth to tread upon, or a drop of water to quench our thirst, we are not left destitute of blessings from God.

Let us then acknowledge the light of the Sun, the breath that heaves our lungs, the glowing plenty that bursts its way thro' the clods of earth; the water that bubbles in springs, that flows in rivers, or that rolls at large in the ocean; let us own that all these are the bounties of his hands, who supplies with good the various ranks of beings high as the most exalted angel, low as the young ravens, or the grass of the field.

The positive blessings we have enumerated have some of them been at times interrupted; but the interruption seemed only designed to make way for some deliverance, and to teach us some useful lesson we were not likely to learn without it.

This very moment let us take a review of twenty or of sixty years, and what a croud of deliverances rise upon us. Deliverances from the danger of childhood, by which some have lost their limbs, and some their lives. Deliverances from a variety of threatenings, particularly

particularly Earthquakes. Deliverances from excruciating pains, and from sore diseases. Deliverances from the gates of death, and from the mouth of the grave. When we have been in deep distress, and covered with awful and dismal glooms, deliverance has dawned in the most seasonable hour, and days of joy have succeeded to nights of mourning. Our deliverances indeed have been endless; we appear at this day so many monuments of delivering goodness. We have also shared in the deliverances wrought for our country and nation, in former and in latter times. Deliverances from the plots and insurrections of enemies abroad and traitors at home; deliverances from drought, and from the awful appearances of pestilence and of famine.

In these instances of deliverances, as well as in the former of positive blessings, let God be acknowledged as the original Efficient, whatever creatures he is pleased to make use of as his instruments. Fortuitous accidents are under his direction, and necessary Causes are subject to his controul. Diseases, famine, sword, pestilence and noisome beasts are his servants, and his soldiers; he sends them out or recalls them as his sovereign pleasure directs to be meet.

See the 14 Chapter of Ezekiel. Son of man when the land sinneth against me by trespassing *grievously*, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send Famine upon it; and will cut off man and beast from it.—If I cause noisome beasts to pass thro' the land, and they spoil it so that it be desolate, that no man may pass thro' the land because of the beasts.—Or if I bring a sword upon that land; and say, sword go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it.—Or if I send Pestilence into that land: and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast.

How

How much more faith the Lord when I send my four fore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the Famine, and the noisome beasts, and the Pestilence." Four fore judgments indeed!—Now then, where is the benefactor to whom we are indebted like unto God? What a variety of blessings and of deliverances has Jehovah the Supreme ruler of the World, made us the subjects of; and what obligations of gratitude do such favours lay upon us.

These are the cords of love, the bands of a man, wherewith he would draw us to obedience.

Now then let us make the enquiry, what returns has this benefactor received from us for all this goodness? The discovery, which this enquiry will make may confound us all; for we are all (tho' some more than others) guilty in this respect.

Some there are that do not return to God the gratitude of a dog to his master. That brute animal that receives but crumbs at our hands, will welcome us home with a thousand obliging motions. The dull Ox knows his owner, and the stupid ass his master's crib, but O lamentable some there are who do not acknowledge the agency of providence in these enjoyments, but make natural causes the author of all our good.

Others there are who tho' orthodox in their faith, yet are practical infidels; that is, while they acknowledge the agency of providence in these things, live as if there was no such thing; live thoughtless of the divine benefactor for months, for years together; and altogether disobedient unto him. The very mercies he bestows upon them, they abuse to his dishonor, by making them occasions of sin.

If one whom we have deeply obliged, should prove ungrateful and use us ill how do we resent it. But it is altogether impossible that one man should be guilty of
 the

the like ingratitude to another, as we are guilty of to God; because one man cannot possibly be indebted to another in like manner as we are indebted to God.

At the head of all this stands the Lord Jesus Christ, the inestimable gift of God. God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God sent his Son into the World, not to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him might be saved.

The comforts of this life alone, would be a poor provision for creatures born to exist for ever, in another; for what are Sixty or Eighty years to Eternity. But in the unsearchable riches of Christ are contained the most ample provisions for our immortal state.

Jesus Christ is so great a gift as draws all other gifts after it: So argues the Apostle, "He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

The purposes also for which he gave this gift, render it the more amazing; He gave him not only to rule us by his power, but to purchase us with his blood.

He gave him up to Death even the death of the cross: In consequence of which, an economy of grace, a ministry of reconciliation, is set up in our guilty World.

Various means are appointed, and many endeavours used to save miserable and perishing sinners. For our Salvation Jesus now intercedes in heaven at the right hand of God. For our Salvation the Holy Spirit strives with us, conscience reproves and admonishes us; Providence draws us by blessings, and drives us by chastisements innumerable; Angels minister to us; friends advise us, and Saints pray
for

pray for us. For this end Prayer, preaching, baptism and the Lord's Supper are instituted. For this end Heaven is furnished with many mansions; the glittering gates open, and dart their splendors from afar to attract our attention, and *life* and *immortality*, are brought to light by the gospel; for this purpose also Sinai thunders, and the dismal regions of despair roar, and belch forth sulphurous flames, to warn a stupid world not to come into that place of torment.

The strong-holds of sin and Satan, in which, sinners are held prisoners, are in kindness attacked from all quarters: and thanks be to God, these efforts are not in vain.—The Heavenly regions are fast peopling with colonies from our guilty Globe; tho' we greatly fear not so fast as the Land of Darknests.

In these dregs of time, when iniquity abounds, and the love of some waxes cold, Jesus is gaining many hearts, and saving many Souls, in the different apartments of the Church.

Tho' many even in this place should be left yet so much worth shall not want admirers; such a Physician shall never want employ in our sickly and dying World. On the contrary, he shall assuredly see of the travail of his Soul and be satisfied, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

We then are the subjects of this administration of Grace; with us these means are used for our Salvation; to us Jesus is offered as a Saviour, and heaven and earth are striving to lodge us safe in his arms.

It is but a small part of mankind that enjoy these advantages for a happy immortality.—We live under the Gospel, while many of the Nations of the earth are sunk in Heathen idolatry; groaning under Popish tyranny; seduced by Mahometan imposture, or hardened in Jewish infidelity. And what obligations of gratitude

result from such favours.—Men have obliged us, and we *feel* the obligation; but can men, can angels bestow such gifts upon us, as those already mentioned?—Provisions for an Everlasting state; these are favours worthy of God; favours that bespeak him God. Must he not then be the object of our Supreme Gratitude?—and yet be astonished O ye Heavens at this! How little gratitude does God receive from our World after all.

Do not many, in this awful day of rebuke and blasphemy, ridicule and despise the Lord of Glory, and that Salvation which he has purchased with his Blood? Do they not audaciously attempt to pluck the most brilliant Jewel from his splendid, and refulgent Diadem and cast it down in contempt to the earth, even his eternal power and God-head? Witness those horrid expressions of a celebrated Divine and Philosopher of the present day, who deliberately and solemnly declared, that all the evils that ever existed, either in Church or State, originated from that one single circumstance, the acknowledging the Divinity and God-head of Jesus Christ; and in consequence of this that he would never rest till he had pulled down that *Idol Christ* from his throne. But let this bold, heroic son of the Socinian Church take heed lest that Idol Christ first cast him and his unhappy and deceived followers into the dismal shades beneath.—the regions of woe and despair, where not one single drop of water will ever be vouchsafed them to cool their blasphemous tongues.†

Again,

† What will these restless spirits, these soaring minds, and these Philosophic men be at? to what amazing lengths will they proceed? the pride of their understanding is so insufferably great, that they will scarcely deign to submit even to Jehovah himself. Whatever is proposed to them as an object of Faith, which they are unable to comprehend with their shallow Reason, they instantly spurn from them with disdain, and fully being resolved that no bounds

Again do not many neglect the means of their Salvation, and resist the kind efforts that are used, from all quarters to save them? O the load of ingratitude that lies at this moment upon us! It is assuredly, then, on account of our ingratitude to God; on account of our vile abuse of his abundant mercies and goodness, together with the large catalogue of other crimes, such as luxury, dissipation, effeminacy, oppression, gaming, suicide, profanation of the sabbath and Name of God,* perjury, extravagance, pride, infidelity, and atheism, which we as a Nation, are at this time stained with to our eternal disgrace, that Jehovah is so displeased with us, and to all human appearance, about so awfully to chastise and afflict us.

For

shall be set to their researches, their presumptuous and unhallowed thoughts, they are continually attempting to amaze and astonish mankind with their strange and ridiculous productions, their foolish reveries, in the propagation of which they take a very peculiar delight. Cease then, O my Soul, from all such men, and submit thyself to be taught of God.

* The Christian Sabbath, (says a late eminent Divine) is an inestimable privilege to the Church of Christ. It is a pledge of God's distinguishing love. It is a happy means of building us up in knowledge; of establishing us in Faith; and preparing us for our everlasting rest.—Yet, is it not shamefully profaned in city and in country? What multitudes waste it in idleness or squander it away in unedifying conversation? making it by far the most useless and contemptible day in the week. This they do, even tho' God strictly charges, saying, Remember the Sabbath day, not barely to abstain from your ordinary works, but to keep it holy, devoting it entirely to holy purposes, and religious exercises. This they do, even tho' God solemnly threatens, saying if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour the palaces in Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Is not the name of God, (says the same Divine) great, wonderful, and holy? ought it not to be used with the deepest veneration, and magnified above all things? but is it not audaciously dishonoured

For our parts, then, we greatly fear, except a general Reformation shall take place among us, among all orders and degrees of men, that this land will ere long, if we may be allowed the expression swim in blood; for without all controversy are they the fore judgments of God, that are now abroad in the Earth, by reason of the crying sins of the nations: such as those already mentioned; and if this should be the case what a miserable what a wretched, what a deplorable and forlorn situation shall we be in.

Realize for a moment the horrid scene.—Husbands torn from their wives now bathed in tears and overwhelmed in sorrow inexpressible. Fathers snatched hastily away from their infant offspring, never, never to behold the little innocents more. Young men in the bloom of life and the vigour of their days, for ever taken from their aged and decrepid parents, now left destitute of every earthly comfort, and almost all means of support, fast hastening, amidst wrinkles and grey-hairs with sorrow to the grave. Houses plundered; wives and daughters violated, cannons roaring, while showers of red-hot balls issue forth from their flaming mouths, amidst scenes of terror, of sulphur, and of smoke. Thousands, and it may be tens of thousands of our fellow mortals weltering in their blood, some
with

red, and impiously blasphemed? dishonoured by customary and wanton, blasphemed by false and perfidious swearing? Has not the most high God declared that he will in no wise hold such daring wretches guiltless? yet, how do these daring wretches swarm, like the locusts of society, in our polluted land? O England, how is thy air tainted with this breath of the infernal Pit! How do thy streets resound, most horridly resound, with this language of Hell! And will not the Almighty Lord make thee know,—know by bitter experience what that meaneth, which is spoken by his prophet, ‘Because of swearing the land mourneth,’ mourneth under afflicting visitations and desolating judgments.

with their arms, and others with other limbs most dismally torn from their mangled bodies, while shrieks upon shrieks fill the resounding air with cries, the most pitiable and melancholy. Yea, already see the earth deluged in blood!—in the blood of man! Man once formed in the image of God, now imbruing his hands in the blood of his brother! let us then a moment pause and drop a tear.

O ye Priests and Ministers of the established Church, for to you we cannot forbear to look in the present awful situation of affairs, how will you answer it at the great day of God, if it should be found that you have contributed much to that deluge of misery, with which we are at present threatened, by reason of the *modern* doctrines, that many of you preach, and the *unchristian* lives that too many of you live. ||

At a moment then like this, when schisms and divisions abound in the earth, and the sore judgements of God hang over our guilty heads, *permit me* for once to advise you, by every thing sacred and dear, to rouse yourselves from the bed of *sloth*, and begin to consider the great importance of your office, your ministerial character, and your pastoral care. O that the words of Jehovah to the Prophet Exekiel might now begin to sink deep into each of our minds.—Son of man I have made thee a Watchman to the house of Israel, therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.—When I say to the wicked, the drunkard, the swearer, the prophaner of my holy day;
the

|| Let it not be supposed that we here mean to include the whole body of Clergymen; on the contrary, we have the pleasure to know many, who are steadily engaged in preaching up the doctrines of the Gospel in their purity, free from every adulteration, and whose lives are the most pious and exemplary. May it please God to increase the number.

Liar, the Thief, the Miser; and the Debauchee, O wicked man thou shalt surely die.—If thou warn not the wicked man to forsake his wicked ways, he shall die in his iniquity but his *blood* will I require at thy hands.”

Let us hear also the words of Christ to Peter, ‘Feed my sheep,—feed my lambs.’ Let us listen a moment to the exhortations of Paul to Timothy (his own son in the Gospel) and to the Elders of the church of Ephesus,—‘Take heed to thyself, says the venerable Apostle and to thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both *save* thyself, and them that *hear* thee.—Study to shew thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (to saints and sinners) the Word of Truth.—Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.’ And again, to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus,—‘Take heed unto yourselves and to all the Flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.’

May we then lay the axe to the root of the tree, and preach up the doctrines of that excellent Church of which we are Ministers, which we have solemnly engaged before both God and man to support, and for the support of which we receive our stated salaries.

Let us insist on the fall of man, as related by Moses; the *total* depravity of *human nature*, as asserted in language the most *clear* and *explicit*, in the articles and Homilies of our Church, and the *spirituality* of God’s holy law; that it extends to the thoughts and emotions of the heart; that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, falls under its condemning power, that no flesh living shall be justified by its deeds, and that now it is become our Schoolmaster to bring

us to Christ. Then let us declare to our hearers, that free and full Salvation that is in Jesus Christ, for perishing sinners, considered in the capacity of God-man. § Let us make known to them the great and fundamental doctrine of Justification by Faith, without the deeds of the Law, that *Articulus stantis, vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*, || as Luther affirms, fort heir steady and unshaken adherence to which, in opposition to the absurd doctrines taught by merit mongers in the Church of Rome, thousands of pious Martyrs have shed their blood. † Let us explain to them also true Repentance, and the absolute necessity of the sacred influences of Divine grace to purify and renew them; to cleanse and heal them of all their spiritual maladies, and to seal, and prepare them for eternal glory.

And

§ For a Clergyman who has thoroughly imbibed the principles of Arianism, (as is confidently said to be the case with too many in the present evil day) to receive the emoluments arising from the Church of England, as his justly merited reward, for teaching and instructing to the utmost of his power, the people committed to his charge, in the pious and wholesome Doctrines of the same, is, in our opinion, a master-piece of hypocrisy, and serves to prove the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and the awful situation we are in at the present alarming moment.

In such case, let a man come nobly forward and resign, whatever his preferment may be, or otherwise, let him blush at the consideration of his base and unworthy conduct, and prepare himself to give account of his behaviour at the awful bar of Jehovah. Such perfidious sons of the church are no great credit to their worthy mother. On the contrary, they are ungrateful enough, while they eat of her Bread, and sumptuously feed at her table, to lift up their heel against her.—Wretched children!

|| An Article, whereby the true Church of Christ inevitably stands or falls.

† Whoever desires to gain some information respecting the leading Doctrines of the Romish Church, must read the Twelve last

And lastly, let us never forget to inform them of the readiness; and great willingness of God to save sinners, even the vilest of the human race, in this his own appointed way; that there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, thereby
guarding

articles of the Creed of Pope Pius IV. dated at Rome, in the year of our Lord 1564, together with some expressions used by TETZEL and his associates, respecting the inestimable privilege of Indulgences, a little before the Reformation, which are as follow :

XIII. I Most firmly admit and embrace apostolical, and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observations and constitutions of the one catholic and apostolic church.

XIV. I do admit the Holy Scriptures in the same sense that holy mother church doth, whose business it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of them; and I will interpret them according to the unanimous consent of the fathers.

XV. I do profess and believe that there are seven sacraments of the new law, truly and properly so called instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary to the salvation of mankind, though not all of them to every one, viz. baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and marriage, and they that do confer grace: and that of these baptism, confirmation, and orders, may not be repeated without sacrilege. I do also receive and admit the received and approved rites of the Catholic church in her solemn administration of the abovesaid sacraments.

XVI. I do embrace and receive all and every thing that have been defined and declared by the holy council of Trent concerning original sin, and justification.

XVII. I do also profess, that in the mass there is offered unto God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead; and that in the most Holy Sacrament of the eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ: and that there is conversion made of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the Catholic church calls TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

XVIII. I confess that under one kind only, whole and entire, Christ and a true sacrament is taken and received.

XIX. I do firmly believe that there is a Purgatory; and that the

guarding our hearers from every shadow of despair, and let us see that our lives be answerable thereto. Alas! shall it be said, and that too by the ungodly, that such a Clergyman is a man *gluttonous*, a *wine-bibber*, an intimate companion of *publicans* and *sinners*!—

C 2

That

souls kept prisoners there, do receive help by the suffrages of the faithful.

XX. I do likewise believe that the saints, reigning together with Christ, are to be worshipped and prayed unto; and that they do offer prayers unto God for us and that the reliques are to be had in veneration.

XXI. I do most firmly assert that the images of Christ, and of the Blessed Virgin, the mother of God, and of other saints, ought to be had and retained: and that due honour and veneration ought to be given to them†.

XXII. I do affirm that the power of indulgencies was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is very beneficial to Christian people.

XXIII. I do acknowledge the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman church to be the mother and mistress of all churches, and I do promise and swear true obedience to the Bishops of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

XXIV. I do undoubtedly receive and profess all other things which have been delivered, defined and declared by the sacred canons and œcumenical councils, and especially by the holy synod of Trent; and all things contrary thereunto and all heresies condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the church, I do likewise condemn reject, and anathematize.

† The Papists, by a most unparalleled blasphemy, have joined the Virgin Mary with Christ in the work of our redemption, and some of them have been so impiously bold, as to parallell the virtue of her milk with the efficacy of Christ's blood. Tillotson's S. 228.

See also TETZEL's expressions respecting indulgences.—“If any man purchase Letters of Indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to its salvation. The souls confined in Purgatory, for whose Redemption Indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment, and ascend into Heaven:—that the efficacy of Indulgences was

That such a one is a *Miser*, an excessive lover of filthy lucre, a man greedy of sordid gain!—And that a third is a gambler, a continual card-player, a debauchee. O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!—but stop, we will quit this part of our subject.

What

so great, that the most heinous sins, even if one should violate (which was impossible) the Mother of God, would be remitted and expiated by them, and the person be freed both from punishment and guilt.—“For Twelve-pence you may redeem the soul of your Father out of Purgatory.”——This is in very deed marvellous. This is far beyond what one could ever have supposed the heart of Man capable of, were it not above all things deceitful, and desperately wicked. O cursed lust of Gold, to what unheard of enormities dost thou push on the human race!

Let us here also subjoin the following circumstances which may serve to throw some light on the doctrine of INFALLIBILITY, so positively claimed by the Church of Rome, together with a specimen of Popish prayers to the Saints. There are many capital errors (says a certain Writer) into which several Popes and Councils have fallen, and not a few of the Popes have issued contradictory decisions and decrees; one Pope condemning what his predecessor had approved; one Council rejecting the Decrees of another Council.—Pope Innocent III. reversed a decree of Pope John I. as did John XXIII. reverse a decree of Nicholas I.—Gregory I. decided in opposition to Pelagius II.—Leo VIII. in opposition to Adrian III.—and Nicholas I. in opposition to Zacharias.—The Council of Constance and Pope Gelafius II. issued opposite decisions, as did the Council of Trent and Gregory III. &c.—In two General Councils where Popes presided and concurred, Viz. the Councils of Basil and Constance, the superiority of a Council above the Pope was declared, and yet by two other Councils, and these headed by Popes concurring with them, Viz. that of Florence, and the last Lateran Council, the superiority of the Pope above a General Council was determined. Pretty work! here is Infallibility with a witness! O ye papists how is it that ye will thus abandon your Reason, and suffer yourselves to be so shamefully deluded?

Now then for a specimen of popish Prayers.—A prayer to St. Agnes. “O Agnes, woman of the Lamb, do thou enlighten us within, destroy the roots of sin. O excellent Lady after the grie-

What then, say you, would you advise us in such a situation, and in circumstances such as these to do. And do you really wish for our advice, our dear hearers, as your servant for Christ's sake in this matter? O that you would hearken unto it, that you would receive it, and for ever abide by it.

Our

vances of this world, do thou translate us to the society of the blessed." Capital indeed! this is so completely ridiculous, that it is even laughable. But the upshot of all is the effects of the above Doctrines, which from the beginning have been those of wounds, of blood, and of slaughter, the Papists having unanimously agreed to exterminate Protestants, so far as their power has permitted them, from off the whole earth. Witness the following particulars.—In the year 1209, they published a crusade against the Albigenses and Waldenses, and destroyed near 70,000, without distinction of either age or sex, in the city of Beziers only, besides thousands in the country. On the 24 of August 1572, at Paris were massacred in the dead of the night, not less than 25,000 Huguenots. For this horrid and execrable action, Pope Gregory XIII. ordered a publick Thanksgiving, and sent a Legate to Charles IX. to intreat him to continue it. During the reign of Queen Mary, many British Protestants were cruelly put to death. And on the 23 of October 1641, about 100,000 Protestants were either burnt, or buried alive, hanged, drowned, or ript open, &c. by Papists in Ireland. Be not surpris'd O Reader, at this, for the Canon Law determines "that the person who doth not abjure his heresy, and immediately return to the orthodox Faith, shall be given up to the secular judge, to receive the proper punishment of his crime." The fourth Council of Lateran also decreed, that Catholics who should take up the Cross, gird up their Loins, and be active in exterminating heretics, should enjoy the same privileges as persons going to the relief of the Holy Land.—And the Council of Toledo says, we the holy Council, promulge this sentence or decree pleasing to God, that whosoever hereafter shall succeed to the Kingdom, shall not mount the Throne, till he has sworn, among other oaths, to permit no man to live in his kingdom who is not a Catholic.—And if, after he has taken the reins of government, he shall violate this promise, let him be ANATHEMA MARANATHA, in the sight of the eternal God, and become fuel for eternal fire.—And Bellarmine says, "if it were possible to root out heretics, for without doubt they are to be de-

Our advice to you then is this, to fear God; to walk in his holy ways, and to give praise and glory to his sacred name. Fear not him, says our Lord that can kill the body, and after that hath no more that he can do; but I will forewarn you whom to fear; fear him, who not only can kill the body, and after that is able to cast both soul and body into Hell: I say unto you fear him. Yes fear him and then you shall be safe; safe if not in this World, yet shall you be sure to be safe in the World to come.—“When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, that he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” To do that which is lawful and right is to repent of sin, to fear God, to love him, and to adore his holy name, for his abundant mercies bestowed upon us. It is to be pure in heart, and holy in all manner of conversa-

stroyed root and branch.” O rare Christians! persist in your pious work, which is that of butchering and slaughtering all that differ from you in opinion, and no doubt, Jesus Christ will, at the great day of God, abundantly reward you. Remember the holy command delivered to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ, “Arise Peter slay and eat.”

It must not be said, as the writer alluded to observes, that Popery is changed. The Church of Rome must abandon her pretence to Infallibility, before her advocates can be allowed such a plea. Besides her principles and her practice of late years, declare the contrary.——Witness the conduct of Louis XIV. Voltaire tells us also, that even since the year 1745, no less than EIGHT Protestant Ministers had been hanged, for no other crime than that of their Religion. God be merciful to us! if such are the principles of the Church of Rome, and such their consequences, does it not behove every Clergyman, in conjunction with all Protestant Ministers of every denomination, to use their utmost endeavours to retard the Progress of them in this kingdom, and especially at a time like this, when attempts so serious are on foot, and no artifice left untried, to remove every restraint from the Catholics, and allow them full liberty to propagate their horrid, wicked, ridiculous, and persecuting principles, every where, and in every place.—O TEMPORA, O MORES!

tion; to practice the sacred precepts of justice, to love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

This is the duty, the indispensable duty of all men, and to further promote this, ought to be the constant endeavour of all the ministers of the gospel. This is what Jehovah requires at the hands of all his creatures, and for want of this, it is that his Almighty arm is now so awfully uplifted to punish and afflict us. And such persons as do not, or will not acknowledge this are sunk into a state of far greater *stupidity* than the brutes of the Earth.

Let us then, in this hour of distress, cease, for ever cease, to add to the crying sins of the nation by cursing Ministers of state as the authors of all our calamities, and consider these sore afflictions as brought upon us by the hand of Jehovah, purposely to chastise and humble us, for our *various, our grievous and multiplied crimes*.

But to return, whoever then desireth to do that which is lawful and right, to fear God, to love him, and to walk in his holy ways, in order that he may be eternally saved, must now make haste and turn to Christ and be ingrafted into him that he may receive *spiritual strength*, from God his saviour.

Let us then dwell a moment on this delightful subject the mystical union subsisting between Christ and all true believers. All true believers in Christ, have put on the Lord Jesus Christ as a garment; they are knit together; they increase by him as a head, with the increase of God. He is their life. He is formed in their hearts. In him they are rooted as branches in the vine. Thrice happy are they then who are thus joined to Christ, and found in him, not having their own righteousness. Such as are called by his name; they are partakers of his fulness; and in all their afflictions, he is afflicted. You treat ill and abuse one of these
little

little ones, Christ immediately exclaims why persecutest thou me? But when you clothe his naked, and feed his hungry members, he esteems it as done to himself. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.—And before him shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.—And he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father: for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me.—Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the *least* of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Such are the excellent of the Earth, they are the salt of the Earth, and the light of the World.

Let each of our hearers then be taught to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, however he may be set at nought by the numerous followers of *Socinus* in the present evil day.

If it still be said, what shall we find in Christ? The answer is, all that you want; all that you can possibly wish, for it hath pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell. Because you are by nature guilty, and have a burden of sin on your Souls, Christ is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the World. This spotless Lamb of God has shed his blood for sinners, and endured that whole load of vengeance which they have deserved. In this amazing manner has he obtained their pardon, not of some only, but of all sins.—He blotteth out transgressions as a cloud. Because you are weak, Christ has the residue, and the
fulness

fulness of the Spirit; the seven Spirits of God are before his throne; and the promise of the Holy Ghost, in all his sacred operations, and with all his celestial graces is to you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord, our God, shall be pleased in his infinite mercy to call.

Christ then is the sinner's help, his light, his life his strength and his salvation. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.—Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall receive power from on high to create your Soul anew; to form your temper and spirit after the model of the Gospel; to make you pure in heart, to enable you to walk as he himself walked upon Earth, and thus to qualify and prepare you for eternal Glory.

Here then is grace sufficient for you in Christ, so that you need not listen a moment to the sullen voice of Satan, who would tempt you to despair. The Doctrines which we preach, are not the doctrines of despair but quite the reverse. Whatever then hinders you Christ removes; whatever you want Christ bestows.

Whoever then he is that accepts of Christ freely and unreservedly, as his only Lord and Saviour, shall save his Soul alive.—He shall be saved with an everlasting Salvation. He shall rejoice in Christ Jesus here upon Earth, and shall enter into the joy of his Lord hereafter. When the earth is burned up, he shall see it.—When the Heavens pass away he shall behold it.—When all nature sinks into dissolution he shall enjoy the ruin. For sure as *Shakespeare* observes in language the most sublime and awful.—

“ The cloud capt Towers, the gorgeous Palaces,
The solemn Temples, the great Globe itself,
Yea all which it inhabit shall dissolve,
And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.”——

Still

Still the true believer in Christ, at that dread moment shall leave a dissolving world, to possess a kingdom in Heaven! to wear a crown of Righteousness, and to be forever with, and for ever like, his glorious and blessed Lord. Happy then is each individual person, who has believed in Jesus, with the faith that is the operation of God; happy would it be for mankind in general, and for the inhabitants of this Kingdom in particular, were they to accept of Christ as their only Saviour and cordially to embrace the faith of the Gospel. Then wars and frightful rumours divisions, animosities, and tumults would cease; the earth also would bring forth her increase, and God, even our own God, would give us his blessings. Then drinking, & gaming, lying and defrauding, slander and filthy conversation, pride and dissipation, would be done for ever away, and nothing amongst mankind should we behold but love, peace, harmony, friendship and good-will. When this happy event shall take place then the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid, and the Calf and the young Lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. But this is not yet the state of the case, and before this desirable event shall take place, great troubles we have reason to fear will come on the earth; yea on every part, it may be, of the whole Terraqueous Globe.

But again, how little then is Death, the great king of terrors, to be dreaded by a believer, since it will convoy his soul to inconceivable joys, to endless bliss. Attend then a moment, O ye pious and penitent souls, to a few considerations suggested to our minds.—The time is swiftly advancing when you shall shuffle off the clog of mortality, and with holy confidence commit your dust to the silent grave, till the shrill trumpet shall

shall burst the barriers of the tomb, and call forth the dead to stand before God. These mortal bodies shall, in a little time, be no more exposed to pain, to disease or decay. A few more days and ye shall be completely delivered from the reproaches of an unkind world; from the abusive treatment of the wicked, and from the snares, stratagems, and crafty plots of the Devil; when Death arrives, who is to the Godly, a messenger of peace, a final period will be put to all inquietude of mind: sin shall no more trouble you, your trials shall be o'er, your doubts shall cease, and you shall enjoy the full possession of every good forever.

Suffer then, we intreat you, the word of exhortation: As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him; being rooted, and grounded, and built up in him.—Put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds.—Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Lay aside every weight, and fight the good fight of Faith.—See the prize in view!—Eternal glories are just before you, and in a little time will meet your eager embrace.—Be stedfast, then, unmoveable, by any wind of false and erroneous doctrine, or the violence of sore temptation, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

But what shall we say to such of you, as are living in a course of sin, and are as yet strangers to Christ, and to his grace. This will we say,—Be not deceived, God is not mocked.—He is angry with the wicked every day, and will at last consume them in his wrath, if they repent not. Whatsoever then a man soweth that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.

Shall

Shall these bodies then occupied in wicked works, and polluted with lusts, the most impure and filthy, ever be admitted into the sweet regions of purity and goodness? Not so, for God will at the last, at the great day of account, render to every man according to his works; To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal Life. To all such, God, the great God of heaven and earth, the supreme Ruler of the universe will give eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, quarrellsome, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, and live in unrighteous practices, indignation and wrath.—Tribulation and anguish unto every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.—But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.—For there is no respect of persons with God;—For as many as have sinned without the Law, shall also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law,

Shall these members then ever be the instruments of a heavenly spirit in the work of Paradise, that have never been the instruments of righteousness and of goodness, while here upon earth. Shall these ears ever listen to the celestial music of Saints and Angels, that have never listened to the sweet sound of the Gospel, but were entertained with the song of drunkards; the loud unthinking laugh, and the impure jest? Shall these tongues ever join the seraphic songs of Heaven that have been far oftener employed in imprecation and blasphemy, the sullen language of Hell, than in Prayer and praise? Shall these feet ever walk the splendid pavement of the New Jerusalem: that holy city of God. which have been accustomed only to walk in the foul and unhallowed paths of sin?—This is altogether absurd to suppose.

Let

Let us, then, a moment pause, and consider the end of all such as forget God, and die in their sins: such shall indeed be turned into Hell, there to wait their torments for ever and ever. O the agonizing pains that such unhappy souls must suffer! There the worm dieth not and the fire of vengeance is not quenched. There they drink of the wine of Jehovah's wrath, poured out without mixture, into the fiery cup of his indignation. There they are tormented with fire and brimstone, and never know a moment's rest night nor day. There the smoke of their torments ascends up for ever and ever. There they writhe and toss, rage and blaspheme, being filled with woe and horrid despair. There darkness surrounds them, the flames of Hell kindle upon them, cruel Devils torment them, the worm of conscience consumes their vitals, and floods of vengeance pour in upon them on every hand. O the horror of such a state; who can dwell with everlasting burnings! who can endure the great Jehovah's wrath when once it is kindled! Let, then, hardened and impenitent sinners take warning in time. Now then O sinner, repent and be converted in this the day of thy grace.—Fly to the arms of mercy in Christ, and lay hold of the words of eternal life. God calls thee now by our voice; the Lord Jesus Christ calls thee by his blood; the Holy Spirit calls thee by his sweet yet powerful operations on thy heart. Still, then wilt thou refuse and rebel? While God continues to reign upon a throne of grace, the worst of sinners, the vilest of the human race, upon repentance, and faith in our Crucified Redeemer, may be pardoned, justified, renewed, born again of the spirit of God, washed, purged from their old sins, and put in possession of all the glorious inestimable privileges of the Gospel.

These offers of mercy will however shortly end;
they

must end when Death shifts the scene, and that
be in a little, little time.

To conclude, the doctrines then which we constantly insist upon, every where, and in every place, are our lost condition by nature; our acceptance before God the Father, thro' Jesus Christ alone; and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's sacred influence, to purify and renew us, to seal and prepare us to eternal Glory. These we firmly believe to be the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, of Jesus Christ and his Apostles; and certain we are, they are the doctrines of the Church of England, as established by Law.

It is then assuredly the indispensable duty of every Bishop and Clergyman, of the established Church especially, to preach these Doctrines to their people, and to spend their precious hours in teaching and instructing them in the true ways of God, and of Salvation. They are the Lord's Watchmen, appointed to give the people warning from his mouth. They are the Ambassadors of Christ, sent to transact the treaty of peace between God and sinners. They are the stewards of the mysteries and the deep things of God, ordained to make their people wise to Salvation, and to dispense among them the bread and the waters of life.

Such then was the constant business of Christ while here upon earth. He went about continually preaching the Gospel and doing good. The Apostles also walked in the same footsteps with their divine Lord and Master. They considered themselves as the ministers of Christ, and as the guardians of that holy religion he came to teach.

Hence they determined after their divine Master's example, to give themselves wholly to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word. They went about warning the unruly, instructing the ignorant, comforting the feeble minded, and supporting the weak; and for the elect's

elect's sake, they endured all things. They bore all things to all men, that by any means they might save some; proving themselves the Ministers of Christ; in labours abundant, in stripes above measure; in prisons frequent; in deaths oft. By pureness, by knowledge, by the word of Truth; by faith unfeigned, by the Holy Spirit, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.—In weariness, and painfulness; in watchings often, in hunger and thirst; in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, besides those things that came upon the Apostle daily, the care of all the Churches. Who is weak, says he, and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?

Happy then will it be for each of us, at Christ's second coming, if we be found so doing.—Happy also will it be for each of our Hearers who shall receive the truth, as it is in Jesus, at our hands, and walk steadily along in the good way, of the Lord, bringing forth, in the whole course of their lives, the blessed fruit of all good works.—Even so, Lord Jesus, AMEN.

FINIS.

